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## The racial and gender makeup of the Lamorinda fire agencies

By Nick Marnell

Results are mixed as to how Lamorinda fire agencies compare to national and local demographics when it comes to diversity in the workplace.

According to a February report issued by the National Fire Protection Association, 370,000 career firefighters were employed in the U.S. in 2018. Between 2015 and 2018, 4% of the career firefighters were female, 8% African American, 8% Hispanic or Latino and 1% Asian. NFPA figures are the result of its survey of U.S. fire agencies and should not be interpreted as an industry standard.

An analysis of district personnel records as of mid-June shows that the Moraga-Orinda Fire District measures up in three of the national categories, falling short in the U.S. rate of Black suppression personnel.

But in the communities it serves, the district exceeds the local ratio with its percentage of African American personnel on the front line. In the two major municipalities under district jurisdiction, using the latest U.S. Census Bureau data, Black residents total 1.9% of the population, while MOFD reports a 4% African American workforce.

The opposite is true with MOFD and Asian personnel. Though it clobbers the national rate with 4% Asian firefighters, the district falls behind the 16% Asian population of Orinda and Moraga.

The district is slightly ahead of the U.S. rates of female firefighters at 5%. And it employs Hispanic firefighters at an 11% rate, higher than both the U.S. average and the 4.5% local population rate.

"MOFD is committed to diversity and continues to seek applicants from all backgrounds to provide the best possible service to our community," Fire Chief Dave Winnacker said.

The Contra Costa County Fire Protection District lists its suppression personnel as 6.4% Asian and 13% Hispanic, above the national average in each category, but below the national averages with 5% Black and 2.7% female firefighters.

A comparison of ConFire numbers to the demographics of Lafayette - 1% African American, 12% Asian, 8% Hispanic - bears results similar to those of MOFD. However, district firefighters rotate among all 27 ConFire companies throughout the county, and only three of those companies lie in Lafayette.

"ConFire is committed to recruiting, hiring, training, and retaining the best and most qualified professionals possible to provide the emergency services our residents expect," Fire Chief Lewis Broschard said. "While doing this, we are also committed to building and maintaining a workforce that reflects the unique diversity of the communities we serve."

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